

### III. Findings, Discussions, and Recommendations

The Internal Safety Review Board (ISRB) was established on July 23, 2018 following the fire incident at 7005 Woodscape Drive, Clarksville, Maryland, which resulted in the death of Fire Fighter Nathan Flynn (FF Flynn). The ISRB was tasked with gathering all relevant facts and identifying factors that contributed to FF Flynn's death, and recommending changes to the Fire Chief that the Howard County Department of Fire and Rescue Services (HCDFRS) can make to help prevent another tragedy of this type.

The following findings and recommendations are organized into fourteen (14) broad areas. These range from unique factors of the structure at 7005 Woodscape Drive to Incident Command to training. Each of the sections that follow detail one of the 14 areas of findings and recommendations. Most of these sections adhere to the following format: first, information about the area in general; second, HCDFRS-specific information about the area; third, incident-specific information (related to incident at 7005 Woodscape Drive) about the area; finally, the ISRB's findings and recommendations for that area.

Over the course of the investigation, the ISRB discovered widespread inconsistencies among current HCDFRS General Orders. **ISRB recommends HCDFRS review and revise all General Orders for consistency.**

The ISRB, through the informal interviews conducted by the ISRB for this investigation as well as discussions among HCDFRS personnel, also identified a widespread belief that department leaders are not promoted or assigned based on merit or experience. Whether this belief is true or not, it has a negative effect on unit cohesion and trust in leadership. This lack of trust with department leadership has been exacerbated by previous decisions to not widely publish previous safety reports, which has led to rampant conjecture and rumors. During this incident, this belief and lack of trust between officers and firefighters likely had a deleterious effect on tactical decision making, impacting overall safety on the fireground. Moving forward, HCDFRS must take steps to regain trust between firefighters and leadership.

As a foundation for rebuilding this trust, the ISRB strongly recommends that Howard County have an independent organizational review of the HCDFRS to make recommendations on improving overall department structure, policies, and procedures. Ideally, the team conducting the department review will have no personal or professional connections to HCDFRS personnel and will include a trained Organizational/Industrial Psychologist to make specific recommendations for improving trust between firefighters and leadership.